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The Crisis of Arabic Poetry Criticism in Light of Contemporary Criticism: A Critical Study on Taming Language through the Philosophy of Meaning

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Abstract

This study aims to provide a fresh examination of the philosophy underlying Arabic poetic criticism. It highlights the most significant critical gaps that have distorted the image of criticism for the recipient and rendered it a means for unwarranted use. This oversimplification has caused criticism to lose its luster and rendered literary output meaningless, creating an epistemological and intellectual crisis that has led to the decline of both poetry and its criticism. This decline, in turn, has negatively impacted Arab culture as a whole, given that the poet is considered a prophet among his people. How, then, can all people claim prophethood through illusory pretenses? If genuine criticism were to regain its authority and influence, matters would return to their proper state, and each individual would recognize their rightful position. It is futile to leave the critical arena to those unqualified. Therefore, we attempt to identify the root of the problem in order to formulate an effective remedy that may contribute to the renaissance of Arabic poetry criticism, restoring it to its revolutionary potential and richness. Although there are multiple causes, and treatment will require time, we have in fact moved beyond the stage of prevention, as the current landscape bears witness to the corruption of taste and the alienation of cultural identity.

Keywords: Critical studies; poetry criticism; taming of language; philosophy of meaning; contemporary criticism.

Introduction

Critical studies are an endless sea, with literary and linguistic studies forming only a part of them. They draw upon all sciences and arts, which is why students find them difficult to understand despite the gradual stages of their teaching. This difficulty arises from the multiplicity of their fields, the complexity of tracking their outcomes, the diversity of their readings, and the abundance of their terminology. Students may feel that these studies have no solid foundation, and that criticism itself needs criticism. If they struggle with the specter of primary criticism, how can they cope with the behemoth of secondary criticism? This is especially challenging in the field of poetry, particularly for those who indulge in imagination and complex rhetoric, who employ inversion and ellipsis. It becomes difficult to grasp the meaning due to the strangeness of the structure, making it hard to learn, let alone critique.

Research Problem:

What are the critical gaps that have negatively impacted the criticism of Arabic poetry?

Importance of the Study:

- Identifying weaknesses in Arabic poetic criticism.
- Defining the true image of the concepts of criticism and critic.

Research Objectives:

- Restoring Arabic poetry to its rightful place in Arab culture.
- Purifying Arabic criticism from impurities that have distorted its image.
- Developing a comprehensive and exclusive true critic.

The Crisis of Poetry Criticism in Relation to Prose Poetry

The current critical landscape has been further complicated by the tendency to equate poetry with other literary forms, dismissing its distinctive qualities. This perspective often emanates from individuals unable to compose traditional verse poetry, who instead attempt to construct artificial poetic frameworks for what they term 'prose poetry.' While this analysis does not seek to disparage any literary genre that demonstrates merit, it must be noted that the prose poems presented thus far in literary circles have largely obscured rather than illuminated the essence of poetry.

Personal reflective writing, though often dismissed by self-proclaimed literary elites as amateur, frequently exhibits greater poetic cohesion and authenticity than this prematurely conceived genre. Prose poetry emerged with inherent verbal and conceptual flaws, which its proponents have attempted to remedy through poorly substantiated research, predominantly reflecting foreign literary theories incompatible with Arabic rhetorical traditions and sensibilities.

Literary appreciation is fundamentally rooted in aesthetic pleasure, which arises from the harmonious integration of poetic elements—a quality conspicuously absent in prose poetry. Even accomplished traditional poets who have experimented with prose poetry acknowledge the substantial disparity between these forms. The crisis has been exacerbated by what might be termed 'historical revisionism,' a phenomenon that coincided with the ascendancy of Western-centric literary thought and seeks not merely to obscure facts but to negate and supplant them entirely.¹

This interpretative approach has extended to the explication of prose poems, attributing meanings beyond their actual content and expecting audiences to be impressed by inherently vacuous work. While acknowledging that prose poetry possesses a certain elegance within its original linguistic and cultural context, as exemplified by Charles Baudelaire's works, Arabic rhetorical traditions are fundamentally less accommodating of such forms, rendering the comparison itself problematic.

When Adonis asserts, "The majority of Western poets who produced prose poetry had previously written in traditional metrical forms; prose poetry represented the culmination of their poetic evolution rather than an artistic retreat from complexity to simplicity,"² this perspective significantly altered the stringent critical framework applied to Arabic poetry. However, the structural comparison between foreign and Arabic poetic traditions is intrinsically flawed; Arabic poetry's essence extends beyond mere metrical considerations, and mere knowledge of prosody does not equate to the ability to compose meaningful verse—such attempts often result in technically correct but aesthetically and emotionally vacant compositions.

Western poetic traditions often seem to approach poetry as though following a prescribed template would ensure excellence. In contrast, the standards governing Arabic poetry are not immediately apparent to the eye. One might possess all the technical tools and linguistic proficiency, yet still be unable to produce genuine poetic verse. This raises the question: wherein lies the essential quality of poetry? There exists an intangible element that may emerge through practice and experimentation, but only if the individual possesses both an innate poetic sensibility and a deep, internalized understanding of the poetic tradition through extensive exposure to and comprehension of others' works.

Ali Dakhil Faraj's characterization of this genre as "hermaphroditic," as evidenced in his work "The Trial of the Hermaphrodite,"³ is indeed apt. This emergent form has precipitated a shift in critical practice from explicit textual analysis to implicit interpretation, fostering a tendency to seek meaning between the lines—meaning that was never inherently present in the original text.

The Fallacy of Critical Presumption

Two categories of critics have proven particularly detrimental to poetry criticism: firstly, those who, unable to compose poetry themselves, attempt to impose frameworks from other literary genres onto poetry; and secondly,

practitioners who presume critical authority solely by virtue of being poets. The latter, despite lacking fundamental critical competencies and analytical acumen, frequently engage in critical discourse. Their critiques often devolve into mere identification of orthographical, grammatical, and metrical errors. These critics fail to recognize that texts exhibiting such basic flaws should be disqualified from serious critical consideration ab initio; otherwise, the distinction between genuine literary criticism and mere proofreading becomes meaningless.

Inherent Flaws in Critical Methodologies

Arabic poetic appreciation and critical philosophy resist the application of pre-fabricated critical templates—an approach characteristic of Western systematic methodologies such as structuralism, stylistics, and semiotics. This incongruity has created a significant impasse in Arabic poetry criticism. The indiscriminate application of these methodologies to Arabic poetry, without due consideration of its unique characteristics, constitutes a fundamental disservice to the form. These approaches, predicated on statistical analyses, encumber rather than enhance the critical process, fixating on textual formalism while disregarding crucial elements such as authorial intent and the contextual factors instrumental in textual composition.

Conversely, contextual approaches—historical, sociological, psychological, and others—which examine texts through their external frameworks, have similarly fallen short of serving criticism adequately. These methodologies have expanded the realm of interpretation beyond reasonable bounds, ultimately diverging from the desired scientific rigor in critical analysis. Nevertheless, it appears paradoxical that educational curricula do not emphasize these contextual approaches in poetic textual analysis, as they are more conducive to developing a balanced Arab critical perspective. These approaches encompass multiple knowledge domains, though their complexity may present challenges for students' comprehension.

Critical Duplicity

Critical duplicity manifests prominently in two domains: poetry competitions, both national and international, and academic scholarship. One frequently encounters poems deficient in poetic merit receiving unwarranted accolades due to political interference, the author's reputation and standing, or as a result of divisive regionalism and deep-seated animosity. The public, misled by these awards, comes to regard such works as exemplary, leading to the proliferation of mediocrity at the expense of genuine poetic excellence.

In academic spheres, particularly concerning master's theses, doctoral dissertations, and scholarly publications, the selection of poetry collections or individual poems for study is often predicated on the author's name and socio-political status rather than artistic merit. This practice obscures truly noteworthy poetry and diminishes aesthetic discernment. Even more concerning is the tendency to unduly favor female poets, bestowing upon them unmerited accolades.

Perhaps most alarming is an extremist perspective that dismisses all metered and rhymed traditional poetry as derivative and plagiaristic, deeming it unworthy of scholarly attention. This view advocates exclusively for modernist poetry that abandons all conventional poetic constraints, considering only such work to fall within the circle of genuine creativity.

The Encroachment of the Novel

The excessive preoccupation with the novel genre at the expense of poetry—by poets themselves—has significantly encumbered contemporary poetry criticism. This shift stems from a calculated global literary movement that has subjected the Arabic language to general disdain and accusation, with poetry bearing the brunt of this contempt. This trend has influenced poets to view the novel as a more accessible and universal medium, subscribing to the notion that each era has its defining genre. Consequently, poets have begun venturing into novel writing without the requisite talent, resulting in the deterioration of both poetry and the novel form. This misguided transition has not only diluted the quality of literary output but has also contributed to the declining standards of both genres.

The Critic as an Exceptional Reader

The critic must approach texts distinctly from the lay public, reconstructing the intricacies of composition as though they were the author themselves. This caliber of critical engagement is largely absent today, hampering the development of a comprehensive Arabic poetic critical theory. Several factors contribute to this deficiency:

- Critical studies have been undertaken by individuals lacking proper qualifications. Competitive examinations fail to assess genuine critical aptitude, typically employing direct questions that do not elicit the candidate's critical vocabulary. Subsequent efforts by such students inevitably produce insipid critical texts due to the fundamental absence of talent.

- The majority of those dominating the critical landscape are incapable of composing poetry themselves. An effective critic must be able to propose alternatives when evaluating a work. If a critic is not a poet, they would be better served focusing on other literary genres.
- The misguided pursuit of alternative linguistic frameworks, as though Arabic were inadequate for critical discourse. This places the critic in a philosophical and contextual environment divorced from the essence of the Arabic language.
- The tendency to overextend textual interpretation beyond reasonable limits, merely to create an impression of profound insight. This approach ultimately destroys both the text under examination and the criticism itself.

The Proliferation of Critical Terminology

The excessive presence of critical terms has generated significant confusion within the field, effectively obscuring genuine criticism beneath an avalanche of pseudo-critical jargon that, rather than illuminating texts, has only served to diminish them. The abundance of Arabic terminology alone has created considerable uncertainty among critics; this confusion is further compounded by translated foreign terms, which have transformed the critical landscape into a veritable minefield of ambiguity. Post-translation, a single concept often splinters into multiple interpretations, resulting in divergent critical readings and spawning yet more superfluous terminology—an expansion that ultimately proves detrimental to the field of criticism itself.

The Predicament of Inadequate Translation:

A significant issue arises when individuals lacking proficiency in bidirectional translation undertake the task of translating critical texts. Such translators, often native Arabic speakers, attempt to render foreign concepts into Arabic using only a general understanding or automated translation tools. Crucially, while they translate into Arabic, they lack the capacity to translate from Arabic into the source language—a clear indication of insufficient translation expertise. This inadequacy has particularly affected the transmission of Western critical approaches and terminology into Arabic discourse. These concepts are frequently applied without proper consideration of their compatibility with Arabic linguistic frameworks, resulting in critical disarray and a distortion of the analytical process. Problematically, this misrepresentation persists under the guise of developing Arab critical theory. The fundamental issue lies in the continued reliance on methodologies that have demonstrably failed. Perhaps most concerning is the persistent appointment of the same inadequately qualified individuals to conduct research through university laboratories and Arabic language academies across the Arab world.

The Perils of Hasty Critical Assessment:

Literary works, particularly poetry, require multiple readings across different temporal contexts before a meaningful evaluation can be made. A critic encountering an elegiac poem while in a joyous state may unfairly dismiss it as subpar. Similarly, a critic's fluctuating emotional state can lead to inconsistent judgments, potentially resulting in an unjust assessment of the author's work. Furthermore, when critics encounter challenging vocabulary or complex meanings within a text, they may hastily label both the poetry and its creator as deficient or superficial, rather than acknowledging the limitations of their own comprehension.

The Infiltration of Poetic Mediocrity:

Upon examining modern and contemporary Arabic poetry, readers frequently encounter a profound void in poetic quality—works bereft of aesthetic appeal, imaginative imagery, or compositional craft. A significant concern is the tendency of poets to merely repackage identical concepts throughout their verses, simply varying the lexical presentation—a practice that has undermined the critical judgment in poetry competitions. Even more troubling is the emergence of a phenomenon, widely recognized by the general public, where poets produce verses whose meanings remain obscure even to their own creators. This gives rise to pseudo-critics who meticulously attempt to analyze texts that remain cryptic even to their authors, ultimately eroding the essence of meaningful critical discourse.

The Erosion of Arabic Rhetorical Traditions:

The art of discourse, particularly poetry, fundamentally requires rhetorical expertise, yet contemporary critics often pursue paths that diverge from accepted Arab aesthetic sensibilities. These critics, influenced by Western rhetorical frameworks, produce analyses that appear incongruous when juxtaposed with Arabic rhetorical traditions. Their inclination toward contradictory imagery fundamentally conflicts with the principles of authentic Arabic poetry. The practice of inundating poetic texts with conceptual metaphors while neglecting verbal artistry represents a significant transgression against poetic integrity. Notably, even poetry produced by prominent critics in the Arab world often exhibits an amateur quality, as the pervasive influence of Western poetics and cultural paradigms has

diminished their inherent artistry. Consequently, these Western-influenced approaches have generated works that elicit aesthetic aversion within the Arab literary tradition.

The Deficit in Literary Foundation:

It is axiomatic that critical thinking emerges from a robust foundation in literature. Yet, paradoxically, we often encounter graduate students attempting to engage in literary criticism while lacking fundamental literary knowledge. As they approach their final year, these students frequently cannot recite a single verse of poetry, fail to grasp the nuances of prosody, and remain unfamiliar with even the most prominent critics in their own country, let alone those of international renown.

Financial Influence and Media Distortion in Literary Criticism

The integrity of literary criticism has been significantly compromised by the dual forces of financial corruption and manipulative media practices. We have witnessed countless instances where mediocre poetry collections have been funded, published, and aggressively promoted, serving merely as vehicles for individuals seeking notoriety through subpar artistic expression. The complicity of critics in this phenomenon, manifested through their silence, represents nothing less than a disservice to cultural advancement. Rather than fostering genuine literary values, this tacit acceptance has perpetuated a legacy of deteriorating standards. Those who dare to speak truth to power invariably find themselves confronted by the formidable alliance of wealth and media influence. Perhaps most alarming is the infiltration of these corrupting forces into academic scholarship. In this distorted landscape, the caliber of research has become secondary to financial considerations, while media visibility is increasingly contingent upon monetary resources and superficial appeal rather than substantive merit.

The Fallacy of Contemporary Criticism: A Defense of Traditional Poetics

A troubling trend has emerged in contemporary literary criticism wherein poets who adhere to classical prosodic structures are hastily dismissed as mere imitators or, more severely, accused of plagiarism. The primary evidence cited for such accusations is remarkably superficial: the utilization of Al-Khalil's metrical system and the employment of direct, declarative expression. This critical stance has created an artificial imperative for poets to pursue novelty at any cost, often resulting in deliberately obscure compositions characterized by cryptic, repetitive imagery that defies comprehension.

The Concept of Criticism:

Although most definitions of criticism converge on this meaning, stating: "It is one of the literary arts that aims to study, interpret, analyze, and compare literary or artistic works with similar or contrasting pieces, then judge them by explaining their value and rank, i.e., evaluating these works."⁴ However, in poetry criticism, the study goes beyond examining literary and artistic effects to encompass other sciences such as social and natural sciences, and even exact sciences. Those who have studied poetic meters and prosodic circles in particular will discover Al-Farahidi's genius in constructing the mathematical engineering of this science, namely the science of prosody.

The What of Criticism

While most critical definitions converge on a common understanding—namely, that criticism is "a literary discipline aimed at studying, interpreting, analyzing, and comparing literary or artistic works with similar or contrasting pieces, ultimately evaluating these works by elucidating their value and hierarchical position"⁵—poetry criticism transcends mere examination of literary and artistic effects. It necessarily encompasses various disciplines, including social and natural sciences, and even extends to exact sciences. Those who have undertaken a thorough study of poetic meters and prosodic circles, in particular, will recognize Al-Farahidi's ingenuity in constructing the mathematical framework underpinning the science of prosody.

Prior to exploring the philosophical dimensions of poetic line construction, a poet must consider the external formal features of verse, including metrical selection. Consider, for example, the following lines composed in Al-Kamil meter:

To say: A spirit for the Prophet and his soul
Who among women is like the flower of As-Siddiq?
In the perfect meters, I forged her perfection
(Mutafa'ilun); so that you may discern my path⁶

These verses notably employ Al-Kamil meter, characterized by the triple repetition of the foot pattern Mutafa'ilun in both hemistichs. The foot Mutafa'ilun is generally regarded as the foundational unit from which all other metrical feet derive; through inversion and various modifications (zihafat and 'ilal), all other metrical patterns can be generated. Al-Kamil meter has become the preferred vehicle for contemporary poets due to its compositional accessibility and versatility across diverse themes and purposes, embodying a perfect synthesis of form and meaning.

Any accomplished poet understands that, in genuine poetry, the words naturally dictate the meter rather than being constrained by it. The practice of forcing words to conform to predetermined metrical patterns has diminished poetry's vitality, resulting in inferior verse. Even when composed by skilled practitioners, such poetry reveals its inadequacies upon repeated readings, though these flaws may defy precise linguistic articulation.

Regrettably, contemporary criticism frequently confines itself to analysis, interpretation, and evaluation, neglecting its most crucial function: rectification—the process that distinguishes genuine expertise from mere pretense. In the rectification phase, the discerning critic differentiates between vision and perspective. Possessing true critical vision enables immediate recognition of textual flaws upon first reading, akin to discerning flavors in cuisine. This rapid perceptual ability develops through consistent engagement in critical practice during general reading, rather than being confined to formal educational contexts.

The Philosophy of Critical Cultivation

The cultivation of critical thinking in Arabic literary studies primarily occurs through the channel of memorization before any other method. Those who have not mastered this characteristic lack the most crucial element of critical thinking. The mind seeks a vast poetic knowledge base. After systematic storage comes repetition, which reinforces what has been memorized. It is essential to choose appropriate times for memorization and repetition. For instance, memorization can begin an hour or more before the dawn prayer until midday, while repetition can occur at any time when the mind is at rest. Following repetition comes melodic recitation or intonation of the memorized material. This musical element helps preserve what has been memorized. Singing poetry was one of the most important practices of poets in the past and was their arena for composing poems.

Following the initial stage, which serves as the first step for the critic, comes the phase of critical analysis of the poem. This process extends beyond the knowledge of Arabic language sciences to encompass various other disciplines, including the culture and traditions of society. The goal is to reach the true stage of critical thinking, characterized by the power of intuition and insight. This strength of intuition and insight is derived from the practice of literature and other sciences, not merely from learning. Practice breathes life into the inanimate, endowing language with senses akin to human senses. When reading any text, the critic experiences delight similar to the enjoyment of food. This occurs during the first reading, while the second reading involves a different approach, dissecting parts of the text as if searching for the ingredients of this "food."

Those who study the nature of criticism find that critics often seek ways to justify every element they critique, aiming to avoid doing injustice to the poet. This requires careful thought and extensive knowledge. In seeking these justifications, the critic often steps into the poet's shoes, as if they themselves were the author of the poem. Regrettably, many literary scholars hold the belief that wide reading alone is the foundation of good criticism, even though reading without comprehension can drain one's critical faculties. Even minor attempts to unpack meaning open a new perspective for the reader.

The philosophy of cultivation demands patience and perseverance. A person might dedicate their entire life to becoming something akin to a critic, as the idea of a fully realized critic is essentially a myth. The notion of an "encyclopedic critic," often lauded in various circles, is nothing more than distasteful propaganda. If you were to confront such a praised individual, you would witness the depth of the disaster they are entangled in. Here, we are not referring to those with narrow, specialized expertise, but rather focusing on the poetry critic. A poetry critic must gather flowers from every garden, not just a single bloom.

Diversity of knowledge cultivates taste in the reader, and it is essential for the reader to refine this taste. The development of taste comes through engaging with knowledgeable individuals across various fields. It is nearly impossible to cultivate taste without a genuine love for the subject, as love can work wonders. You cannot tell me about a critic who hates poetry, or, more broadly, who dislikes any field of knowledge while fully understanding that criticism requires it. If someone harbors such disdain, it reveals their ignorance, and they cannot truly be considered a critic.

The researcher Othman Mouafi, in his book *Studies in Arabic Criticism*, advocated for enlightenment through the principles and theories of European criticism, stating: "It should not be understood from our call for critical study to be based on the principles of Arabic criticism that we disregard European criticism and exclude it from consideration; quite the opposite."⁷ I may agree with him in regard to certain literary genres, but not when it comes to poetry. Arabic poetry possesses a distinct character in both composition and criticism, and imposing foreign

frameworks for its analysis suffocates its essence. The very nature of Arabic poetry resists translation, let alone foreign methodologies and techniques used to interpret it. Unfortunately, by adopting this approach, both criticism and the critic have become lost, as we embarked on a path that has engulfed everyone—the author, the reader, and the critic alike. This has led poets to lament: "What is the point of printing poetry collections when the reader is nowhere to be found?" In truth, the reader does exist and consumes all manner of texts, both significant and minor, but they are in search of something lost. The guide themselves now needs a guide, for those steering the ship are sinking it, and the consequences of this misguided approach are plain to see. As the saying goes, "the lesson lies in the outcome," and the result of misapplying critical standards, particularly with Arabic poetry, has led to critical inadequacies. These inadequacies manifest in critics who see their opinions as absolute, dismissing all dissenting views as irrelevant noise. This, indeed, is the ailment at hand.

If we were to identify the most critical factors that have led criticism astray, it would undoubtedly be "the lack of studies and research on the teaching of criticism."⁸ This is the most crucial aspect that contributes to the philosophy of cultivation. Teaching literary criticism is the distillation of experiences, not just the transfer of knowledge like other disciplines. Those who fail to gain these experiences will remain silent, and they will only write once they have truly mastered poetry. If you were to ask those with degrees in critical studies to write articles on the teaching of poetic literary criticism, the scale of the disaster would become apparent.

Thus, I call upon the ministry to appoint inspectors to oversee the educational process of criticism in universities, as it is the cornerstone of knowledge. The reason students are turned off by criticism is often the teacher's lack of understanding. As the saying goes, "One cannot give what one does not have."

Conclusion

The Arabic language, and particularly its criticism, has become a target of degradation. As long as poetry remains the repository of Arab culture, there are forces at work distorting it. The erosion of the language begins at the very early stages of education. You find students spending five years in school, yet emerging as though they had never attended! Even the poems selected for school curricula are weak, both in meaning and structure, and riddled with errors. Some may argue that primary education is unrelated to poetry criticism—I cannot fathom their reasoning. We once memorized and recited the finest poems, through which we built a rich linguistic foundation, mastered expression and dictation, and it is through this that we now defend our language. Today's generation, however, struggles to construct even a simple, coherent sentence! How, then, can they be expected to defend their language? If the foundation is flawed, everything that follows is corrupted. Love for a subject is the greatest motivator, and if that love is extinguished in childhood, what hope remains?

The bitter reality is that the weakest students are often funneled into the humanities, particularly Arabic language studies. This has led society to view the Arabic language with disdain, even to the point of mocking those who study it. If society holds such a low regard for the mother tongue, what, then, can be expected of the state of criticism?

Unfortunately, we are moving against the critical current that we should have followed. The proper path is for the student to begin with literature, then progress to language, and finally arrive at criticism. However, what we observe is that students obtain their degrees with almost no literary foundation. When it comes to language, more emphasis should be placed on practicing it through intensive practical work, compelling students to write by creating workshops and inviting skilled authors and academics. There is no place for discussing the opinions of others in such a setting—the focus should be on creativity and innovation. What has exhausted us is the contradictory nature of theoretical concepts.

Moreover, there is a pressing need to establish laboratories dedicated to criticism in general, and Arabic poetry in particular. Admission to these should be reserved for those who have proven their excellence through previous work, which should be rigorously evaluated. The individuals leading such work must be prolific writers, precise in their knowledge, and both intelligent and insightful. The downfall of research laboratories stems from assigning inexperienced researchers with insufficient knowledge of literature and language. Even those who are proficient in language but lack a solid grounding in literature are not suitable for such environments.

One of the major pitfalls of criticism in Arab universities is the requirement for professors to master foreign languages, particularly English. However, when it comes to the criticism of Arabic poetry, even if a professor were fluent in every language on earth, they would still fail to effectively critique poetry. This has been the downfall of many brilliant minds, especially in Algeria. If we look at the field of medicine as an example: a student might achieve an excellent academic record and aspire to become a doctor, only to find that the French language becomes a barrier to their progress, as medicine is taught in French in our country. Many talented individuals are lost due to such a trivial obstacle. If scholarships were allocated to these students and they were sent to universities where medicine is taught in Arabic, we wouldn't lose so many bright minds.

For the contemporary Arab, poetry should not just be something to critique but a way of life. It should be as vital as life and death itself, something they breathe in like oxygen, and savor like food. This is the lifestyle that ancient Arabs embraced, and it is what immortalized their legacy.

The reality of the situation is heartbreaking; a satirical poem is sent to someone, exposing their flaws and those of all mankind, and they laugh! Chivalry died in them long before the language did, so how can criticism survive in such an environment? This epidemic is spreading because such individuals are present in every decision-making position. The patient and the doctor are both doomed—indeed, the doctor will perish before the patient!

Some may accuse me of madness when I suggest that literature, language, and criticism should be promoted in the streets, by placing murals showcasing the most famous and profound sayings. This is because sovereign decisions and universities have become influenced by what the street produces, and it is now the street that determines who rises and who falls. Parents celebrate their children mastering foreign languages, yet show no concern for their failure in their own mother tongue! This is where civilization collapses. Cultural colonization takes root, manufacturing agents and traitors to both homeland and religion. The current state of the Arab nation is the clearest proof of this. You see so-called intellectuals sprinkling foreign words into their speech, believing it crowns them with status, and the public praises them as cultured! Is there any greater upheaval for the Arab nation than this?

Criticism of Arabic poetry is facing a slow death, akin to that of a drowning person! The crisis is exacerbated by the pervasive denial present in the Arab world during every upheaval. Criticism will not flourish unless every writer views themselves as part of a larger nation and refrains from waiting for others to take action. Change must begin with the individual, then extend to the community, creating a school of thought rather than a prison, and building their knowledge on foundational principles rather than superficial aspects, with the branches following thereafter.

Regardless of the challenges, Arabic poetry will not lose its brilliance; it will continue to shine like the morning sun, eternal and unyielding, waiting for those who are devoted to the language to guide the lost souls in research and exploration toward the source of enlightenment. This will allow Arabs to recognize the value of this hidden treasure and to cast aside the distractions that linger⁹ in every corner of knowledge.

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